

Committee: Youth Assembly (YA)

Issue: Endorsing the use of governmental financial aid to students of vulnerable populations

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Position: Head

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

My name is Kathleen Morris. I am an IB1 student at ACS Athens and I am delighted to be serving as your Head in Youth Assembly in this year's ACGMUN. I will be guiding you through the topic of "Endorsing the use of governmental financial aid to students of vulnerable populations" and I am thrilled to hear your fruitful debates and solutions upon the matter.

This conference will be my 17th MUN experience, and I cannot wait for everything it will teach me. Youth Assembly is one of my favourite committees because it allows for young individuals to learn more about socioeconomic issues and cultivates young leaders and changemakers through education, action, and impact. It is my responsibility, through this study guide, to provide you with an overview of the topic for you all to craft action papers to your full potential. It is important that you thoroughly read through this guide to help you fully comprehend the issue and think of feasible solutions. I cannot wait to see you all in person to further discuss upon this matter.

Should you have any questions about the topic at hand, do not hesitate to contact me, you can do so through the email below.

Kind regards,

Kathleen Morris

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TOPIC INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by increasing emphasis on environmental sustainability and the imperative to reach net-zero carbon emissions, one of the most critical and interconnected aspects of societal progress is ensuring that students from vulnerable populations have equitable access to education. This entails endorsing the use of governmental financial aid as a potent tool in dismantling systemic barriers that hinder educational attainment and economic mobility. The connection between the general objective of reaching net-zero emissions and educational support, despite their apparent disconnection at first glance, serves as a powerful reminder of the complex issues our global community faces.

Educational equity, particularly for students from vulnerable populations, stands as a vital aspect in the broader framework of environmental sustainability. It recognizes that the most effective way to catalyze meaningful change is by empowering all segments of society to participate fully in shaping a greener and more sustainable future. Financial aid is the gateway that bridges the gap between aspiration and opportunity, ensuring that those facing economic hardship, discrimination, or limited resources can access the education necessary to drive innovation and environmental progress.

Furthermore, the importance of endorsing governmental financial aid in the context of vulnerable student populations extends beyond individual opportunities. It is crucial for achieving net-zero emissions as it reinforces the idea that sustainability is fundamentally interconnected with social justice. By ensuring that educational opportunities are accessible to all, we cultivate a diverse, skilled workforce that can contribute to green innovation and the transition to renewable energy sources, ultimately accelerating the global shift towards net-zero emissions.

In essence, endorsing the use of governmental financial aid to support students from vulnerable populations is not only an investment in human potential but also a powerful lever for realizing a more sustainable future. By breaking down educational barriers and fostering a diverse, knowledgeable workforce, we lay the foundation for innovative solutions to combat climate change and reach the vital goal of net-zero emissions, while simultaneously advancing the cause of social equity. In the nexus of education and environmental sustainability, lies the key to forging a brighter, more inclusive, and environmentally conscious tomorrow.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Vulnerable Populations

“Includes girls and women, refugees and migrants and persons with disabilities, who are more likely to suffer from educational inequalities and face discrimination.”¹

Equity

“The situation in which everyone is treated fairly according to their needs and no group of people is given special treatment”²

Governmental Financial Aid

“Money that students can get from the government and other entities to help pay for their college education. It includes grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study.”³

Discrimination

“Treating a person or particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way from the way in which you treat other people, because of their race, gender, sexuality, etc.”⁴

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Systematic Barriers to Education

Economic Barriers

Economic inequality is a major factor in the barriers to education. Access to good schools, resources, and instructional materials is frequently hampered by poverty. For families with low resources, the costs of tuition, textbooks, transportation, and uniforms present serious obstacles. Furthermore, early dropout rates may result from children's need to contribute to home money, especially in areas where child labour is common. Natural catastrophes brought on by climate change further compound

¹ “Ensuring the Right to Education for Vulnerable Groups | UNESCO.” [www.unesco.org, www.unesco.org/en/right-education/vulnerable-groups](http://www.unesco.org/www.unesco.org/en/right-education/vulnerable-groups).

² Cambridge Dictionary. “DISCRIMINATION | MEANING in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” Cambridge.org, 2019, www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/discrimination.

³ “What Is Financial Aid?” *Mosdotcom*, 30 Aug. 2021, www.mos.com/blog/what-is-financial-aid/. Accessed 5 Nov. 2023.

⁴ Cambridge Dictionary. “DISCRIMINATION | MEANING in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” Cambridge.org, 2019, www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/discrimination.

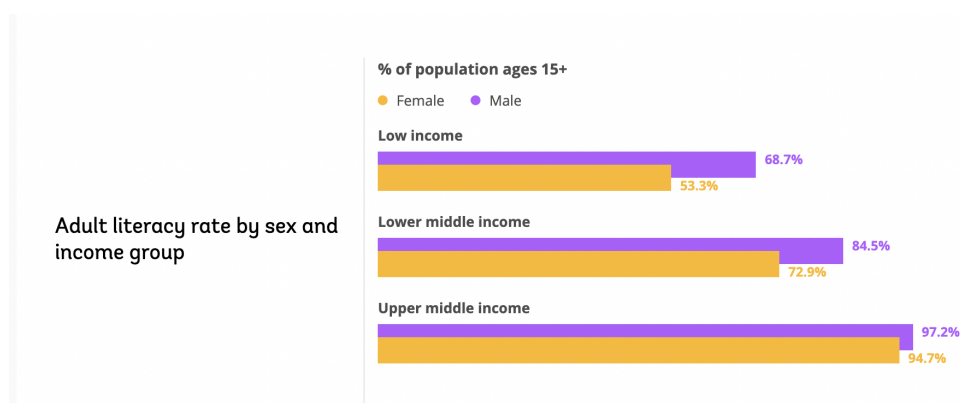
economic hurdles by uprooting communities, destroying infrastructure, and upsetting livelihoods. As a result, families find it difficult to prioritise schooling during times of hardship.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Certain populations have historically and presently been excluded from receiving high-quality education due to ingrained racial and ethnic disparities. Racial and ethnic minorities have had less educational chances due to discriminatory legislation, segregation, and unequal resource distribution. Marginalised populations frequently experience poor school financing in their local areas, which results in education that is of inferior quality. This makes it difficult for them to access education because of infrastructure damage, relocation, or a lack of resources for rehabilitation.

Gender Disparities

Access to education has long been hampered by gender-based barriers, especially for women and girls. Gender-based violence, cultural norms, and societal expectations might hinder girls' access to education and prevent them from completing their education. In many countries it is a common phenomenon that due to religious stereotypes or totalitarian governments restrict girls' access to education by assigning them home responsibilities or marrying them off young. An example of this is that Nigerian women still face different forms of neglect and discrimination in the majority of communities. Many Nigerian women have centred their lives on their houses due to patriarchal ideas that are frequently promoted through religious interpretations, not allowing them to pursue their education.



The figure on top shows the literacy rate between genders in different income groups. It is evident from above that only about 50 percent of females from low-income households receive an education.

Geographical Barriers

Geographical issues obstruct educational access in rural and marginalised communities, such as distance, lack of infrastructure, and restricted access to schools. Students find it difficult to attend school on a regular basis in remote regions because they frequently lack access to adequate transportation, classrooms due to lack of good infrastructure, and skilled teachers who move to pursue their careers in more economically developed countries, an extreme example of this is the Caribbean region. Events brought on by climate change, such as floods, droughts, or harsh weather, can harm transport networks and infrastructure, further isolating already isolated areas and reducing access to education.

Natural Catastrophes

Natural disasters and environmental crises provide serious educational difficulties in the context of climate change. Hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and droughts are examples of natural disasters that can demolish schools, uproot kids, and interfere with regular school schedules. This frequently results in extended breaks from education, which exacerbates already-existing educational inequities, especially for marginalised people that already have a difficult time recovering and reconstructing their educational systems following such events.

Consequences of Educational Inequalities

Due to the glaring differences in both quality and access, educational inequality has serious ramifications for both individuals and society as a whole. People who don't have easy access to high-quality education find it difficult to gain the information and skills needed to progress economically. It restricts economic mobility as a result, locking many people from marginalised or disadvantaged backgrounds into lower wage groups and fewer work opportunities. This economic stagnation keeps people in poverty and prevents future generations in these places from moving up the socioeconomic ladder.

Furthermore, the influence of educational inequalities plays a major role in the growing economic disparity that exists within societies. Better education frequently leads to higher-paying occupations, but it also increases the risk of underemployment, unemployment, and stagnating income for individuals without access to such chances. This economic disparity exacerbates social stratification and uneven wealth distribution by widening the gap in income distribution.

The majority of these disparities fall on underrepresented groups, such as members of racial and ethnic minorities, those with low incomes, and marginalised

communities. Their underrepresentation in higher education and the workforce, as well as their limited access to high-quality education, are all caused by structural hurdles that are maintained by restricting their access to excellent education. This stunts their personal development and impedes the advancement of society as a whole since these groups' varied abilities and viewpoints are lost.

Economic Progress Through Education

Economic prosperity is largely dependent on government policies and financing for education, both for individuals and for society as a whole. Education spending is essential because it influences economic growth in a number of ways. The ability of a country to obtain high-quality education is a major factor in its economic strength. Governments provide the conditions for a workforce that is more competent and flexible by funding public schools, scholarships, teacher training, and educational infrastructure.

Education level is a powerful indicator of future earnings on an individual basis. Higher salaries are frequently correlated with higher education levels, such as college degrees or specialised certificates. People with advanced degrees not only have access to higher-skilled employment options, but they also promote career advancement and stability, which boosts economic productivity and individual financial security.

Furthermore, labour productivity and innovation—two important factors for economic advancement—are fuelled by an educated citizenry. Education fosters creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills—all of which are vital for advancing technology in a variety of sectors. A skilled labour force that is able to adopt new technologies and promote creativity becomes essential to economic growth and competitiveness.

More broadly, investments in education are closely linked to social economic progress. An educated populace is a valuable asset that attracts investments, fosters entrepreneurship, and increases a country's competitiveness in the international market. The benefits of education extend beyond personal gain. A population with higher levels of education leads to lower unemployment rates, less dependency on social assistance programmes, and more tax revenues, all of which promote long-term economic stability and prosperity.

Governmental Policies and Funding

The accessibility and calibre of education have been shaped by the substantial changes in governmental policy concerning financial aid and education over time. These policies' historical trajectory is a reflection of how civilizations have changed in their views regarding education and how important it is to the advancement of society.

Governmental policies pertaining to education have undergone several stages of development. In the past, a lot of countries gave their residents little or no formal schooling. But as civilizations developed and saw the value of education, governments started to institutionalise educational programmes. The goal of initiatives like legislation requiring schooling was to guarantee that kids received a foundational education, which would pave the way for more access to higher education.

It is impossible to overestimate the influence of government money on educational accessibility. Education was once frequently restricted to wealthy elites or places of religion. But more government spending made it easier to start public schools, which opened up access to education for people outside of elite circles and women across the globe. Widespread educational possibilities were made possible by government programmes that included funding for curriculum development, teacher wages, and educational infrastructure.

Furthermore, the introduction of financial assistance initiatives was a critical turning point in the accessibility of education. Government-funded loans, grants, and scholarships that were intended to reduce financial obstacles for students from underprivileged backgrounds were essential in making higher education accessible. These initiatives made sure that financial limitations did not stand in the way of educational goals by focusing on less fortunate people, members of racial minorities, and marginalised groups.

Government educational programmes have changed over time to meet a variety of societal requirements. Contemporary strategies prioritise the development of specialised skills and higher education in addition to basic education. The necessity of providing equal opportunity for all students and meeting their various learning needs is acknowledged, and inclusive education is being emphasised.

Moreover, government financing has a role in education that goes beyond primary education systems. The growth of educational infrastructure, research funds, and higher education investments all support innovation, a proficient workforce base and international competitiveness. Through the creation of knowledge and innovation, government efforts promote academic achievement across a range of disciplines and propel economic growth at universities, research facilities, and vocational training centres.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Germany

Germany has shown a strong commitment to education on a national and international level. Internal programmes like its dual education system, which combines academic and practical training, have greatly improved young

unemployment and preparedness for the workforce. Financial obstacles have been eliminated by the decision to eliminate undergraduate tuition fees at public institutions, guaranteeing access to higher education for all students, regardless of background. Furthermore, Germany's achievements in inclusive education demonstrate its commitment to integrating a range of learning requirements into its educational system. Examples of these are Special Education needs for students with physical and mental disabilities as well as language support for immigrant students and refugees. Germany plays a major role in facilitating education access in developing nations, especially for disadvantaged people, by providing financial support, technical knowledge, and cooperative efforts. Germany has demonstrated its commitment to promoting inclusive and equitable education for everyone through its multidimensional approach to education, which combines domestic reforms with international participation.

South Africa

Major educational changes have been implemented in South Africa in order to remedy past injustices, especially those stemming from the apartheid era. The main goal is to provide everyone, regardless of skin colour or financial status, equal access to education. Fee-free education programmes like NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme) are designed to make higher education more accessible to students from low-income families.

Participating actively in continental projects such as the African Union's Agenda 2063 is part of South Africa's regional engagement in education. The nation emphasises the value of cooperative efforts for educational development in the area and contributes to the advancement of educational goals within Africa. The fact that South Africa is participating shows how committed it is to addressing regional education initiatives as well as internal disparities throughout the African continent.

United States of America (USA)

To alleviate educational inequality, the United States (US) government has implemented a number of initiatives and programmes. Programmes such as "Title I"⁵ financing are designed to assist low-income schools by giving them the tools they need to improve student outcomes. Furthermore, "Pell Grants"⁶ and other government

⁵ "The NCES Fast Facts Tool Provides Quick Answers to Many Education Questions (National Center for Education Statistics)." Nces.ed.gov, www.nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=158#:~:text=Title%20I%2C%20Part%20A%20>Title.

⁶ U.S. Department of Education. "Federal Pell Grants." Federal Student Aid, 17 Dec. 2018, www.studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/grants/pell.

student aid programmes work to lessen financial barriers to higher education for students from underprivileged families.

Through programmes like (USAID's) U.S Agency for International Development education-focused projects in less Economically Developed Countries, the United States participates in global educational development. It highlights the value of education in promoting global economic development and stability by providing funds and expertise to international initiatives aimed at enhancing education.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Global education is a priority for UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation. It focuses on programmes that support global access to high-quality education, literacy, and opportunities for lifelong learning. By eliminating obstacles to education, promoting legislative changes, and encouraging global collaboration in the field of education, UNESCO's Education for everyone (EFA) ⁷project seeks to guarantee inclusive and equitable education for everyone. With its wide-ranging influence, UNESCO encourages cooperation between countries in order to accomplish the educational objectives specified in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is a major global advocate for education, promoting diversity in the classroom, educational fairness, and the preservation of cultural assets. UNESCO is essential in influencing international educational objectives and guaranteeing that education stays on the global agenda through research and policy advice

World Bank

The World Bank is an international financial institution that provides loans and grants to the governments of low- and middle-income countries for the purpose of pursuing capital projects. It focuses on enhancing educational access, quality, and relevance while supporting global education projects. It offers nations, who aim at improving their educational systems financial support, technical aid, and policy advice. The education sector receives funding from the World Bank through initiatives that focus on workforce development, higher education, early childhood education, and elementary and secondary education.

The World Bank has a significant influence on education across the world, especially in low- and middle-income nations. It helps governments put changes into place that will improve the effectiveness, equality, and quality of education. Through the use of its resources and expertise, the World Bank facilitates educational

⁷ Nai Cheng Kuo. "Achieving Education for All –Together." SensePublishers EBooks, 1 Jan. 2012, pp. 93–115, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6091-933-6_5.

innovation, capacity building, and policy changes. This greatly aids in the worldwide endeavour to guarantee universal access to high-quality education.

World Economic Forum (WEF)

The intersection of education, skills, and the future of employment is a focal point for the World Economic Forum. The WEF is an independent international organisation committed to improving the state of the world. Through a number of projects and publications, including the Global Competitiveness Report and the Future of Jobs Report,⁸ the WEF emphasises the value of education in equipping people with the skills they need to meet the changing needs of the job market. The WEF encourages discussion on education reform, digital literacy, and the impact of emerging technologies on the workforce of the future by bringing together executives from a variety of industries. It provides a forum for talking on the importance of education for societal resilience, economic progress, and the difficulties of such.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1965	The higher education act was established in the US establishing financial aid programs for low-income families.
1998	Grants were established for low income families in the United Kingdom for education purposes.
December 1990	Teach for America was started in the US
30 January 1998	GA Resolution on educational for all
2008	Bolsa Familia programme established to provide financial aid to indigenous students.
2013	Malala Fund Founded
10 July 2014	The EU introduced the Erasmus+ programme.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Article 26⁹

⁸ “Reports.” World Economic Forum, 26 June 2023, www.weforum.org/publications/?page=1.

⁹ <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights#:~:text=Article%2026,on%20the%20basis%20of%20merit>.

- The Education 2030 Framework for Action¹⁰
- Sustainable Development Goal 4
- GA Resolution on education for all - A/RES/52/84 30 January 1998¹¹
- The right to education, A/HRC/RES/44/3 – 21 July 2020¹²

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Teach For All

Teach For All is an international network of autonomous, locally directed, and regulated organisations. It works in many different nations and strives to alleviate educational inequality by identifying and preparing future leaders who will dedicate themselves to teaching in underprivileged schools and communities for a minimum of two years. The programme was started after Wendy Kopp's Teach For America model, which was started in the US in 1990. The mission of Teach For America was to place recent graduates from prestigious institutions in low-income communities' schools. The model's success paved the way for Teach For All to become an international network.

By offering high-quality instruction in places without sufficient resources for education, this project seeks to reduce educational inequities. The implementation process entails choosing and preparing teachers, placing them in schools, and assisting them in carrying out their instructional duties in these areas.

Teach For All has been successful in bringing attention to educational inequalities and drawing in young people to tackle them. But the effects differ depending on the location. A number of individuals have shared good experiences that have had a significant impact on the communities and lives of their pupils. However, some contend that the program's short duration may restrict its ability to have a lasting effect, particularly when it comes to tackling structural problems in education.

The Malala Fund

An international non-profit organisation called The Malala Fund works to promote girls' education globally. Malala Yousafzai, the Nobel laureate and campaigner for education in Pakistan, and her father Ziauddin Yousafzai co-founded it. The group wants to guarantee that girls receive a free, secure, and high-quality

¹⁰ https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/education-2030-incheon-framework-for-action-implementation-of-sdg4-2016-en_2.pdf.

¹¹ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N98/764/47/PDF/N9876447.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹² <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3877941?ln=en>.

education for twelve years. The Malala Fund was formally founded in 2013 in response to the international attention that Malala garnered for her support of girls' education after she narrowly avoided being killed by the Taliban in Pakistan. The attack increased the importance of removing the obstacles preventing girls from obtaining school and galvanised support for Malala's cause throughout the globe. The Malala Fund promotes girls' access to education and focuses on areas where there is prejudice, poverty, or violence. The programme advocates for policies, makes investments in local leaders and educators, and supports grassroots efforts that advance girls' education. The Malala Fund has been successful in raising the voices of girls who are fighting for education, changing laws, and providing funds for initiatives that help girls finish their education. But problems still exist, especially in areas where there are strong cultural impediments to girls' education, which may slow development. Its attempts to increase awareness and provide resources to underserved populations are nonetheless praiseworthy.

Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

Global Partnership for education (GPE) is a platform for collaboration and finance that helps underdeveloped nations enhance their educational systems. It works together with communities, organisations, funders, and governments to improve learning results, fortify educational systems, and guarantee that every kid has access to a high-quality education. In partner nations, GPE has been effective in coordinating resources and advancing goals related to the education sector. It has made advancement easier in a lot of areas, like enhancing learning outcomes and school enrolment. However, difficulties still exist because of the intricate sociopolitical environments in certain partner nations, which prevents educational objectives from being fully realised. However, it is well known that it has acted as a catalyst for international initiatives to promote educational parity.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Development of Educational Infrastructure

Investing money into school infrastructure is a key component of ameliorating this issue especially for marginalised groups living in underprivileged communities. It is essential that governments provide funds for the construction and improvement of colleges, universities, and schools in these areas to establishing favourable learning environments. This entails not just constructing and maintaining the actual buildings but also making sure that the tools, skilled teachers, and state-of-the-art facilities required for high-quality education are available.

If this were to happen, students will no longer need to relocate in order to obtain high-quality education thanks to improvements made to the educational

infrastructure in underprivileged communities. This close proximity to educational institutions breaks down transportation and distance-related constraints that frequently impede access, and instead supports increased enrolment and improved retention rates among vulnerable groups. Additionally, by guaranteeing that children in isolated or underprivileged locations have access to educational opportunities and resources comparable to those in more fortunate places, the plan helps close the education gap between urban and rural communities.

Implementing targeted support for Sustainable Education Programs

Governments must set aside funds to create and grow educational projects that are especially centred on environmental factors of education and sustainability in order to implement targeted support for sustainable education programmes. This all-inclusive strategy would include curriculum creation, faculty development, and the implementation of sustainable education programmes in educational settings. This proposition is justified by the growing need for a workforce with environmental science and sustainability competencies, which are essential for accomplishing environmental objectives and promoting a more ecologically aware public.

Evaluating and monitoring the impact of financial aid programs

Governments must set up continuing procedures to gather, examine, and evaluate data on programme results and efficacy, especially as it relates to the programmes' effects on disadvantaged groups, in order to implement evaluation and monitoring systems for financial assistance initiatives. This strategy is recommended by the urgent need to review assistance initiatives on a regular basis to make sure the intended recipients and objectives are met. Finding areas for improvement, making data-driven decisions, and maintaining accountability in the distribution of public monies are all aided by this methodical review.

By enabling authorities to make well-informed modifications to assistance programmes based on empirical evidence, it may enable evidence-based decision-making. Authorities can identify places where assistance programmes might not reach their target population or not have the expected effect by closely examining programme outcomes. This allows for programme improvement chances. Additionally, by encouraging accountability and openness, this strategy reassures the public that public monies are being allocated responsibly.

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